

198 use of a special Kirundi terminology (No. 18, p. 1; cf. also above, p. 124).

The characteristic features of Kirundi are as follows:

- 193 1. absence of gender; 2. absence of declension, but nouns are grouped into classes and have special prefixes for singular and plural; 3. the parts of a sentence are governed by the nouns by means of certain prefixes or characteristic syllables (No. 18, p. 2).

All nouns can be divided into ten classes. Certain nouns are doubled in order to intensify the meaning or to give an expression a connotation of familiarity. Like all Bantu languages, Kirundi has very few adjectives; it uses instead participial forms of verbs, nouns, generic concepts, etc.

The most difficult aspect of Kirundi is the structure and system of the verb. It is true the verb as such is simple and its construction and use are logical, but the number and variety of forms is so great that it is extremely difficult to find equivalents for a Kirundi verb form in a European language. There are, for example, base forms, auxiliary forms, conjunctive forms, passive, conditional, causative, oppositional, restrictive, and other forms, altogether more than fifty (No. 18, pp. 32-33). On the other hand, the number of conjunctions is very small; most of them are expressed by auxiliary verbs. Since the Murundi will drop even these if they are not absolutely essential for conveying the meaning, sentences are short, and their manner of speech sounds choppy. If a Murundi were to understand an elegant German or even Latin sentence, he would translate it into at least ten sentences of Kirundi.

194 In addition to the shortness of the sentences, rapidity of speech is also characteristic of the Barundi. The Banjaruanda, on the other hand, speak much more slowly with a somewhat [148] singing intonation. Accent, i. e., stressing a particular syllable or pronouncing it on a certain pitch, is very important for the meaning of a word. This also applies to whole sentences. A European who does not pay express attention to these factors will therefore often misunderstand a Murundi or be misunderstood by him, even if otherwise he speaks and understands Kirundi quite well. As a general rule, the syllable next to the last one in a word is stressed longer [sic] than the others, i. e., as in

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Preface

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Note: When we cite proper names, geographical terms, and other common nouns, we shall write them with the article (1) and the

1. The article (a, i, u), which varies according to word classes, is designated in Runyarwanda works already in existence under the term "euphonic vowel."

nominal prefix (indicating the singular or plural) (2), which are joined

2. The nominal prefix, which indicates the singular or plural, also varies according to noun class.

to the word itself as follows:

Class	Singular	Plural	Class	Singular	Plural
Class I	mu	ba	Class VI	u	n
II	mu	mi	VII	ka	tu
III	n	n	VIII	bu	ma
IV	ki	bi	IX	ku	ma
V	i	ma	X	ha	ha

Article	Number		Word Root	Meaning
	Singular or Plural			
u	mu		ntur	man
a	ba		ntu	men
u	mu		tutsi	Hamite
a	ba		tutsi	Hamites
a	ba		hutu	serfs (cultivators)

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a

ba

twa

Negrillos

193

u

ru

go

palisade

i

n

go

palisades

It would be more logical to give only the root itself as follows:
 /les/ ntu, /les/ tutsi, /les/ hutu and, in the singular, /le/ ntu, /le/
tutsi, /le/ hutu. It would be a matter of habit but the euphony would
 suffer a little by this.

Ethel M. Albert

554 displaying in public the respect and obedience due them. An
 562 intelligent woman makes herself liked or feared, according to the
 593 character of the men with whom she is dealing. Occasionally, it is
 [195] said of a Rundi that "his house is burning", that is to say, despite
 the show of respect, his wife rules the roost. He is afraid of her,
 she nags him, she criticizes him, she wants to decide everything,
 and one fine day she will put poison in his beer, or she will
 calumniate him. However, a woman need not dominate her
 husband in so heavy-handed a fashion to earn her laurels as matri-
 arch. She has her own inferiors to dominate, and there are other
 ways to become the *umutoni* of her husband and the other men.
 Apart from her ability as the mistress of her house and her
 generosity as a hostess, apart from all her obligations, a woman as
 an inferior is likely to understand very well the uses of flattery and
 subservience. She knows how to be an informant, to calumniate
 her superior's enemies as well as her own hated rivals, to show
 herself always loyal and devoted, to make the welfare of her
 superior her primary concern. She also knows how to satisfy
 sexual desires, the need for alcohol, and other demands of the body
 and the spirit. Superiors, apart from their economic dependence
 upon their inferiors, seem to seek them also for the satisfaction of
 what appear to be exceedingly urgent needs for love, respect, and
 loyalty and for entertainment that will take their minds off their
 troubles. It is to have these needs satisfied that they make presents,
 that they give what is asked of them. An intelligent woman busies
 herself with satisfying the desires of her superiors and thereby
 making herself indispensable to their happiness. Neither the
 Sophists, nor Machiavelli, nor the courtiers of Louis XIV have
 anything to teach the Rundi. An intelligent Rundi, like any
 [557] intelligent social inferior, knows that to obtain happiness it is
 necessary only to say yes—to play along with the internal weak-
 nesses and needs by which the superior is enslaved.

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¹*Linguistic note:* Bantu prefixes have been dropped from words that refer to the inhabitants of Burundi. They are referred to as "Rundi" and by their caste-names, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. Other words of the language retain their Bantu form, e.g., *mwami*, king; *mwamikazi*, queen-mother or princess, *hamikazi* in the plural; *muganza*, prince, *baganza* in the plural. The suffix, *-kazi*, designates the feminine. For "Rundi woman," "Tutsi woman," "Hutu woman," or "Twa woman," the Rundi forms will be used, i.e., "Rundikazi," "Tutsikazi," "Hutukazi," and "Twakazi."